GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1897
ANSWERED ON:14.03.2017
Pending Cases with Consumer Fora
Choudhary Col. (Retd) Sona Ram;Kumar Shri P.

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the total number of cases pending before the consumer fora in the country is increasing if so, the details of the number of cases pending in such fora/in various courts of the country;
(b) the details of the fresh measures taken by the Government to reduce pendency along with the further steps taken by the Government in this regard;
(c) the main features of consumer protection laws in India;
(d) whether the Government is taking/ proposes to take any concrete steps for carrying out digitization of public distribution system; and
(e) if so, the details of the efforts made by the Government for carrying out digitization of public distribution system?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE
CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION
(SHRI C. R. CHAUDHARY)

(a) : The details of the number of cases pending in various consumer Fora in the country are given in the Annexure.

(b) : With a view to modernise the existing consumer protection legislation, the Government has already introduced the Consumer Protection Bill, 2015 in Parliament. The Bill seeks to provide, among others, measures for simplification of the adjudication process in the Consumer Fora.

(c) : The Consumer Protection Act has been enacted to better protect the interests of the consumers. The main features of the Act are:-
1. It enshrines six rights of consumers namely, Right to Safety; Right to be informed; Right to choose; Right to be heard; Right to seek redressal & Right to consumer education.
2. The provisions of the Act are in addition to and not in derogation of the provisions of any other law for the time being in force.
3. It covers all goods & services, and all modes of transaction.
4. It provides for setting up of Consumer Protection Councils at the Central, State, and District levels, which are advisory bodies to promote and protect the rights of the consumers.

5. The Act provides for establishing a three-tier quasi-judicial mechanism at the National, State and District levels, commonly known as the National Commission, State Commissions and District Fora, to provide for simple, inexpensive and speedy justice to the consumer disputes.

6. A consumer can seek redressal of his grievance in the appropriate Consumer Fora against any defective product or deficient service or any unfair trade practice, so long as the goods purchased or service availed of was for a consideration.

7. The provisions of the Act are not only compensatory in nature but also preventive and punitive in character.

(d) & (e) : The Department of Food & Public Distribution of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, implements a plan scheme on " End-to-end computerisation of TPDS operations" in all states/UTs in the Twelfth Five Year Plan on cost sharing basis, which comprises digitization of beneficiary database, online allocation of food grains, computerisation of supply chain management, grievance redressal mechanism and transparency portal. As for progress of the scheme, digitization of ration cards under NFSA has been completed in all states/UTs, ration card details are available on transparency portal of all states/UTs, online allocation has been implemented in 29 states/UTs, Supply chain has been computerised in 20 states/UTs, transparency portal are implemented in all States/UTs and online grievance registration system/toll-free helpline numbers are available in all States/UTs.

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